

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 DODE-00 PM-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 NSC-07

CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-11 INR-11 NSAE-00

RSC-01 FAA-00 DRC-01 /070 W
----- 041252

R 171256Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1092

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 11132

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR ET US

SUBJ: LANDING/PARKING/NAVIGATION FEES IN ETHIOPIA

REFS: A) STATE 174979 B) ADDIS 8704 C) ADDIS 3525

1. EMBASSY NOW FEELS THAT BEST POLICY IS TO SUBMIT DIPLOMATIC NOTE DIRECTLY TO MOFA WITHOUT SEEKING FURTHER CAA CONCURRENCE TO PREVIOUSLY AGREED CAA/EMBASSY POSITION ON ISSUE. THIS COURSE OF ACTION WOULD HAVE FOLLOWING ADVANTAGES:

A. WITH NEW GOVERNMENT AND POSSIBILITY OF CHANGES AMONG GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL INVOLVED WITH ISSUE, NOW IS TIME TO PLACE USG PACKAGE ON TABLE. FURTHER DELAYS OCCASIONED BY ADDITIONAL PRE-LIMINARY NEGOTIATIONS MAY LEAD GOVERNMENT TO BELIEVE WE NOT SERIOUS ABOUT COLLECTING SUBSTANTIAL MAAG SUPPORT COSTS.

B. WHILE, PER REF (B), WE MAY BE BACK TO SQUARE ONE ON LANDING/PARKING/NAVIGATION FEES ISSUE, WE WILL NOW HAVE PIECE OF PAPER ON WHICH TO BASE FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH CAA. SUCH DISCUSSIONS COULD CONTINUE WHILE OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS (EG MINFIN, MOD) REACT TO OFFSET REPAYMENT FORMULA PROPOSED IN NOTE.

C. EMBASSY REMAINS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT POSSIBILITY RAPID SETTLEMENT THIS ISSUE IN VIEW CURRENT UNSETTLED POLITICAL SITUATION. HOWEVER, THERE APPEAR NO ADVANTAGES IN FURTHER DELAYING OF NOTE. AT SAME TIME LAYING OUT USG POSITION ON LANDING/PARKING/NAVIGATION
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FEES WITH CAA MAY HELP IN RESOLVING THIS PART OF PROBLEM, AT

LEAST AS FAR AS FORMALIZING PREVIOUS ORAL AGREEMENT ON
PRE-JUNE 30, 1974 FORMULA.

2. IN ORDER TO MAKE NOTE MORE ACCEPTABLE TO PRESENT CAA ACTING
ADMINISTRATOR REGARDING LANDING/PARKING/NAVIGATION FEES FORMULA,
EMBASSY PROPOSES FOLLOWING MODIFICATION TO SECOND PARAGRAPH PROPOSED
DRAFT NOTE PER PARA 2 REF (C):

QUOTE: THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT NOTES THAT IS HAS LONG ATTEMPTED

TO ARRANGE A MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY SOLUTION TO THE INTERRELATED
ISSUES OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PAYMENT OF PARKING AND LANDING
FEES AND OF MAAG SUPPORT COSTS. THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FURTHER
NOTES THAT IN AUGUST 1973 IT REACHED A PRELIMINARY UNDERSTANDING
WITH THE CIVIL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION ADMINISTRATOR REGARDING THE
EXACT NATURE AND AMOUNT OF PAST AND CURRENT CHARGES ASSESSED UNITED
STATES MILITARY AIRCRAFT WHICH LAND IN ETHIOPIA. ACCORDINGLY, IT
WAS ALSO UNDERSTOOD THAT FOR PURPOSES OF DEBT ELIMINATION, ARREAR-
AGES OWED TO THE CIVIL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION COULD BE CREDITED
AGAINST CURRENT MAAG SUPPORT COSTS OVER A TWO YEAR PERIOD. UNQUOTE.

3. SUBJECT DEPARTMENT APPROVAL PROPOSED CHANGES, EMBASSY PROPOSES
IMMEDIATE DELIVERY NOTE TO MOFA AND COPY TO CAA. OUR ORAL PRESENTA-
TION TO MOFA WILL UNDERLINE IMPORTANCE WITH WHICH USG VIEWS PROMPT,
CONCURRENT SETTLEMENT OF BOTH LANDING/PARKING/NAVIGATION FEES AND
MAAG SUPPORT COSTS. WE WILL UNDERLINE OUR WILLINGNESS TO MEET WITH
APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO WORK OUT DETAILED SOLUTION.
WILL MAKE SIMILAR APPROACH TO CAA.

4. IN INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS, CAA OFFICIAL HAS INDICATED CAA WILLING
TO CONSIDER ABOVE-SUGGESTED APPROACH IN ORDER TO START GOVERNMENT
MOVING ON FEE ISSUE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY AIRCRAFT, COST ESTIMATES, AIRPORT FEES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: cunninfx
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ADDIS11132
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740260-0368
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740940/aaaabhyb.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A) STATE 174979 B) ADDIS 8704 C) ADD, IS 3525
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 AUG 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <03 MAR 2003 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LANDING/PARKING/NAVIGATION FEES IN ETHIOPIA
TAGS: MARR, ET, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005